

finds that the State could improve its record on land and water conservation and cultural and historic preservation by adopting some of the strategies used in other states.

Commission Recommendations:

The Commission recommends that the General Assembly provide an additional \$1 billion in funding over five years for land and water conservation, cultural and historic preservation, and related economic development needs. The Commission does not have a specific recommendation as to how the additional funds should be allocated. The Commission recommends that the additional funding be allocated among the existing trust funds and used for a variety of different programs.

The Commission recommends that the existing entities involved in land and water conservation and cultural and historic preservation continue to improve the manner in which they coordinate with one another in order to function in a more collaborative, systematic, and integrated manner so as to maximize the use of State investments. As part of this coordination, the Commission encourages the development of statewide priorities for land and water conservation and cultural and historic preservation and enhanced data collection efforts regarding conservation and preservation needs and efforts.

The Commission recommends a balanced financing approach based on debt financing and dedicated sources of tax or fee revenue. The Commission does not have a recommendation as to the specific mix of additional funding sources for conservation efforts. However, it has identified a number of possible revenue sources for consideration: broad-based tax options; development-based tax options; and tourism-based tax options.

The Commission recommends that both chambers of the General Assembly establish a committee at the start of the 2007 Regular Session to address the State's infrastructure needs including conservation, water and sewer, public schools, transportation, State government facilities, and affordable housing.

The Commission recommends that the General Assembly study further the idea of land mitigation requirements and any authorizing legislation needed to authorize voluntary or mandatory mitigation banking.

The Commission finds that encouraging local government participation in land and water conservation and cultural and historic preservation is a necessary part of any reform to the State's current conservation and preservation efforts. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly consider proposals that would provide additional funding options at the local level for conservation purposes. In addition, the Commission recommends that the General Assembly evaluate the means by which it encourages local participation with projects funded by the four major conservation trust funds with the goal of encouraging greater local participation.

The Commission recommends that the General Assembly consider an enhancement of the tax credits for real property donations for conservation purposes.